

Office of New Americans Advisory Board Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, April 20, 2022  
1:00pm-5:00PM  
Patrick Henry Building

**ONAAB Members Present:** *Hannah Borja, Dr. Fern Hauck, Michael Hoefer, Susannah Lepley, Eric Lin, Djibril Niang, Dr. Ahoo Salem, Bo Machayo, Dora Muhammad, Juan Santacoloma, Dr. Jennifer Crewalk, Kate Ayers*

**ONAAB members absent:** *Soyoung Yoon, Milton Vickerman, Rammy Barbari, Dr. Eva Stitt, Amelia Castaneda, Hassan Ahmad*

**ONAAB Ex-officio members present:**  
*Lyons Sanchez*

**Office of New Americans (ONA) and Governor's Office Staff present:**  
*Dr. Grace Reynolds, Program Administration Specialist, Office of New Americans and Board Administrator, ONAAB*

**Additional Guests:**  
*Suzanne Holland, Advisory Board Liaison*  
*Michael Perez, Special Assistant, Department of Diversity and Opportunity*

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**Welcome and Call to Order**  
*Eric Lin (Chair)*

- Called the meeting to order at 12:30PM. It was noted that we have quorum.

**Eric Lin: Requested Electronic Participation**

- **Eric Called for a motion to allow Dr. Eva Stitt (for medical appointment) and Bo Machayo (until he can arrive in person) to participate electronically**
- **Susannah moved to approve electronic participation for Eva and Bo.**
- **Board members unanimously voted to approve the October 6, 2021 meeting minutes.**

Member	Yes	No	Abstain
Ayers, Kate	X		
Borja, Hannah "Mel"	X		
Hauck, Fern	X		
Hoefer, Michael	X		
Lepley, Susannah	X		
Lin, Eric	X		

Niang, El Hadji Djibril	X		
Salem, Ahoo	X		
Santacoloma, Juan	X		
Vickerman, Milton	X		
Manchayo, Bo	X		

**Kate Ayers: July 7, 2021, Meeting Minutes Approval**

- **Kate Called for a motion to approve Jan 12, 2022, meeting minutes**
- **Michael Hoefer moved to approve the Jan 12, 2022, meeting minutes with no changes.**
- **Hannah Borja seconded the motion.**
- **Board members unanimously voted to approve the Jan 12, 2022, meeting minutes.**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Ayers, Kate	X		
Borja, Hannah “Mel”	X		
Hauck, Fern	X		
Hoefer, Michael	X		
Lepley, Susannah	X		
Lin, Eric	X		
Niang, El Hadji Djibril	X		
Salem, Ahoo	X		
Santacoloma, Juan	X		
Vickerman, Milton	X		
Manchayo, Bo	X		

**Public Comment**

*Eric Lin called for public comment. No public comment was offered.*

**Chair Report**

*Eric Lin provided a summary of EC activities and ONAAB business since the last meeting.*

- See slide deck [here](#) for presentation, but here is a summary:
- Eric has had meetings with ONA, EC, and other boards
- Eric hopes for the EC to meet with Commissioner Avula
- Eric attended the White House briefing on small business supports and workforce development
- Feb 7, 2022- VCU presented the needs assessment survey results so far- other advisory boards invited

- Mel Borja provided an update on the legislative work:
  - Teacher licensure – makes it easier for foreign born teachers become licensed here. (passed)
  - Language Access around Medicaid- This will require that Medicaid program information be accessible on every state agency website (translations into various languages) (passed)
  - HB891 – removes the term alien from the VA code and replaces it with different language (ex: noncitizen). This did not pass.
  - HB2820 allows for individual review of criminal convictions to be considered if they would like to get a license- This was not passed yet.
  - HB444- electronic participation- allows certain public bodies all virtual public meetings. In May, a workgroup will meet to discuss language and law will take effect in September. This will not allow all meetings to be virtual—more to come soon.

### **Office of New Americans Update**

*Grace Reynolds, Board Liaison*

- 7,000 Afghan arrivals so far in Virginia.
- 700 in conference center in Loudon County
- No update on Ukrainians- no immediate future needs at this point
- FEMA- no more information about the migrant buses that are arriving in DC.
- Teacher licensure bill- CWS did a lot of advocacy work for this- This will be a bridge for skilled immigrant program that ONA wants to focus on- focuses on building pathways to license—They are working on a clear pathway guide with VDOE.
- ONA has a new immigration specialist- Kendra Hudson- they were invited to this meeting, but could not attend- They work outside ONA
- Grace has been meeting with Alison Bryan to discuss what was left to do in terms of healthcare licensure
- Grace reminded board members to respond to Dr. Rissler’s request for meeting with refugees + immigrants.

### **Discussion about Annual Report**

*Mel Borja*

- Due dates:
  - April 20, 2022- approve the timeline
  - June 1, 2022- committees and EC submit outline of report (provide structure of the report sections)
  - August 1, 2022- submit the final draft of your section to the EC
  - September 1, 2022- EC reviews and makes edits
  - Sept 15, 2022- Committees review final draft for edits
  - October 7, 2022- Report finalized and submitted to the board
  - Oct 12, 2022- Annual report final in-person review vote and submission
  - Question: Michael asked- how much data will be in this report?

- o Eric: We probably won't have the whole data section, but may need to build rationalization for our recommendations
- o Note: the outline of the draft is due BEFORE our next meeting on June 1, 2022

## **Presenter**

*Alfonso Lopez, 49<sup>th</sup> House District – House of Delegates*

Delegate Lopez spoke about the changing demographic of Virginia and how we must elect representation to reflect our communities. Here is a summary of key points:

- Virginia did not have any diverse representation until the last 10 years. In 1970- Latinos made up 5% of the population; and now, a few years ago, Latino's are 11% of the population of VA.
- Whites have seen a 20% drop in the last 20 years.
- Immigration is what fueled Virginia's economy. The work for this board is vitally important to come at us with commonsense fixes for new Americans.
- He believes that legislative action is what we need to do include and assimilate newcomer communities. We need to give him the best ideas.

Here is a summary of key questions + Answers:

- Eric: what are the odds of us getting a JLARC (Joint Legislative Audit Report Commission) study to look at the demographics? Alfonso: suggested that we get legislative + administrative to support reach out to the business and agriculture departments.
- Mel: Are there particular allies that we should see relationships with? Delegate Alfonso: says he works with several Republicans on new American issues. The frustration is that there are several republicans who support legislation but don't vote for it at the end of the day. EVERY single delegate needs to hear from all of us. We have to be an advocate on these topics. Reach out to committee chairs. Reach out to Kilgore, Webber, and Campbell.
- Eric: What is the best way to get the information to legislators (such as our report)? Alfonso: Email the communication directly to he legislators. Also, the communication should also come from someone that the legislator knows and trusts.
- Bo- how do you turn your ideas from our reports to successful legislation? Alfonso: Before you submit with people, you have to sit down with people and talk to them and tell them what you want to do and find out how it would work with them. He suggests that small businesses is a great topic to encourage. He suggested that the group look at SWAM regulations. Make what it means to be a small business mean something.

**BREAK**

## **Intergovernmental Team**

*Dr. Jennifer Crewalk, IIGA Committee Lead*

*Mel Borja, IIGA Committee Member*

*Juan Santacoloma, Multicultural Outreach Specialist*

### Find the slides here.

- Dr. Crewalk studies how to build resilience in undocumented and newcomer communities, despite what resources they may or may not be able to access.
- Mel Borja- Wants to find out places where delays in USCIS negatively impact newcomer communities (especially related to jobs and schools).
- Juan Santacoloma- Works for Chesterfield County. Wants to focus on how we engage newcomer families into the US school systems. Parents have language, cultural, and digital barriers that make it difficult to engage. School leaders should work to build these partnerships.
- Board broke into groups of 2 to share issues that they would like to be addressed by intergovernmental/intragovernmental agencies. Here is a summary of their reports:
  - Kate+Michael- Would like to see USCIS communicate that their backlogs in renewals in work authorization will not impact employment (to employers + employees). In addition, we need to create better systems to communicate across agencies about families
  - Fern + Ahoo- Medicaid needs to reimburse for interpretation. Title IX says that Medicaid accepting medical facilities must provide interpretation. Some states require that Medicaid pays for interpreter services. This would encourage more people to utilize these services. ONAAB should commission a study among a small group to study of states who do provide this reimbursement. (15 states do it).

## **Committee Lead Report Outs**

*Data for New Americans: Michael Hoefer*

Has been reaching out to data and research organizations across Virginia to build a network of support. This includes Migration Policy Institute. They outlined strategies for community engagement, and if we want them to, they will come speak to the entire board. We may want to consider focusing on collecting data that supports entrepreneurship or economic opportunity.

## **Language Access**

*Ahoo Saleem*

They have been reviewing the language access report, and want to use information from this report and pair it with other communications (panels, or 1:1 interviews). They have a call for help from committees- If you are involved in language access work, then let Ahoo and Eva know.

## **Economic Opportunity**

*Bo Machayo*

They are going to cover the following:

1. Workforce development the needs of new American community- determine the top 10 industries and ensure that New Americans are part of the pipeline to recruit.
2. Data- looking around to determine what top jobs and skill sets do they have that are coming and ways that new Americans can start businesses and support different pathways to licensing and figure out barriers. Find out spaces to deregulate spaces to get a license.
3. Small business- how do we do trade missions to different countries? They will reach out to the Department of Commerce and other government agencies.
4. They asked to let the committee know if you know big companies that are hiring.
  - Fern also requested that looking into developing the workforce opportunities for women.
  - Ahoo asked to explore businesses that offer English classes to employees.
  - Dr. Crewalk mentioned that they should explore how this will impact DACA recipients – they need to find independent contractor friendly organizations that they can work with

## **Access to Services**

*Fern Hauk + Kate Ayers*

4 areas of investigation:

1. Medicaid coverage of dental care
2. Mental health services
3. Expanding access to refugee resettlement services to other immigrant groups
4. Cultural competency

Maybe change our name to building community connections- we will discuss this at our next meeting and determine if this is what we want to do.

## **Looking forward**

*Eric Lin, Chair*

We want to look beyond the annual report for this board.

What are ideas that we could do to highlight our work beyond the annual report?

- Summit- Every 3-4 years
- Explore what it would take to be a welcoming commonwealth
  - How do we notify the rest of the country that VA is a welcoming state?
  - Can we create a welcoming VA initiative- localities unite to do something across the state to demonstrate welcome?
  - We could create the blueprints for a welcoming VA plan and submit to the administration.

## **Miscellaneous Board Business**

*Eric Lin*

- ONA is going to manage a wide distribution spreadsheet that is being developed by the VCU research as part of the needs assessment survey- This can serve as an email distribution list.
- Dr. Hauck- Will send information about a conference.
- Kate- Will update the drive to index the drive, and will start sharing the communications request form in each weekly email
- Grace reminded everyone that committee meeting minutes must be posted within 5 days.

## **Closing Remarks**

## **Adjourn**